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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD - APPENDIX

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# Jewish Life in East Germany

## EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. ABRAHAM J. MULTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1965

Mr. MULTER. Mr. Speaker, I commend to the attention of our colleagues the following article which appeared in the New York Herald Tribune on February 23, 1965, concerning the almost nonexistent Jewish community in Communist East Germany:

JEWISH LIFE TODAY IN EAST GERMANY: A SINGLE RABBI FOR NINE SYNAGOGUES  
(By Martin G. Berck, of the Herald Tribune staff)

There are 1,500 avowed Jews who live in Communist East Germany. Most are elderly persons who receive pensions that enable them to live rather comfortably. As victims of the Nazis, they get a degree of preferential treatment from the state. They worship in nine synagogues maintained by the state, with services conducted by laymen, a few part-time cantors, and a single rabbi remaining in the country.

Those who want it can get kosher meat from a slaughter house in East Berlin. Matzoh for the Passover season is available from Hungary. Prayer shawls are imported from West Germany and Israel. Kosher wine, sweet or dry, comes from Bulgaria.

The East German Jewish community maintains two old-age homes, with state funds. It publishes its own religious and other printed material, including a Hebrew calendar and a newspaper that appears four times a year. As the eastern remnant of a prewar German Jewish population of 600,000, it sees to the upkeep of 125 cemeteries, many centuries old, scattered throughout the country.

An account of this dwindling branch of Jewry emerged last week in an interview with Helmut Aris, a resident of Dresden, and a member of East Germany's Communist Party, who serves as president of the Union of Jewish Congregations in East Germany.

Mr. Aris and two Protestant clergymen—Dr. Moritz Mitzenheim, Evangelical Bishop of Thuringia, and Dr. Gerhardt Bassarik, director of the Evangelical Academy in East Berlin—formed an unusual delegation to the Pacem in Terris convocation of scholars and statesmen convened here by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions.

### TWENTY YEARS

Here for a 5-day stay, they said they believed themselves to be the first East Germans in 20 years to have attended an international conference of this kind in the United States, which, of course, has no diplomatic relations with East Germany. A State Department spokesman in Washington said that other groups, mostly of clergymen, athletes or journalists, have visited here from East Germany from time to time, but not, so far as he could remember, for a political conference. East Germans must first obtain a temporary travel document from the Allied Travel Office in West Berlin before applying for a U.S. visa.

Mr. Aris is a 57-year-old administrator of a scientific institute connected with the chemical industry in Dresden. Like many of his fellow Jews, he spent most of the war as a slave laborer. He escaped and went into hiding at the time of the destruction of Dresden by Allied bombs shortly before the war's end. Mr. Aris has a son who is director of an electromotor factory and a daughter who heads the costume department of a state-owned theater.

There are perhaps 30 Jews under the age of 20 in all of East Germany. According to Mr. Aris, the community sees to it that those of school age receive instruction twice a month in Jewish religious and cultural matters. In the last 2 years, there have been two religious Jewish weddings in East Berlin. Ritual circumcisions—there was one recently—are performed by a Jewish physician in East Berlin. Two bar mitzvahs—the ceremonial admission of 13-year-old Jewish males into the adult congregation—will be celebrated in Dresden in the coming months.

### ROTATING RABBI

For such important occasions, the rabbi, who is Dr. Martin Riesenburger, travels to wherever his services are needed. Otherwise, the rabbi, who is a civil servant, visits the congregations on a rotating basis. There is one synagogue in East Berlin, where about 750 Jews live. There are two places of Jewish worship in Leipzig, and others in Dresden, Erfurt, Karl Marx Stadt, Schwerin, Magdeburg and Halle.

The one in Dresden shares a cantor with one in Leipzig and uses the chapel of a cemetery. For some services there is a choir composed of young Protestant theologians.

As with other denominations in East Germany, statistics on Jews are based only on persons who are registered on community lists. The Jewish community takes no account of persons of Jewish ancestry who are not registered.

According to Mr. Aris, many of the children of mixed marriages choose to remain Jewish and participate in what he described as a "very lively cultural and religious life." Besides religious services, there are concerts held in the synagogues.

Is there pride in Israel?

"But of course," Mr. Aris replied. He went on:

"The Jews of East Germany are proud of the accomplishments of those Jews who are in activities that once were closed to Jews, activities that Jews in the German Democratic Republic could carry on if there were enough of them, such as agriculture."

### NO POLITICS

Mr. Aris put questions of domestic and international politics off limits on the ground that he is not a political man. These included questions concerning the antipathy of the Communist bloc nations to Zionism and to Israel, and the subject of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

Is a religious commitment consistent with a Communist society's view of a "socialist" man?

Yes, said Mr. Aris. "Judaism has always been with progress, and has not been bound by dogma—Judaism has always been socially oriented."

He cited Old Testament laws for freeing slaves every 7th or Sabbatical year, and for redistributing land every 50th year, the Jubilee.

"There need not be any contradiction between socialist belief and the carrying out of Jewish principles and belief," said Mr. Aris. "Even though the reconciling of religious faith and dialectical materialism might present some problems, it need not be approached in philosophical terms, but in terms of everyday living."

Everyday living for Jewish pensioners means getting along on around 650 East marks a month, a sum equivalent to about \$160 at the official rate but with far greater buying power than it might indicate. A couple living on two pensions could manage comfortably, Mr. Aris said. As officially recognized victims of the Nazis, their pensions are higher by around 200 marks than other East Germans, and they are permitted to retire at an earlier age. For men, it is 60; for women 55.

### NO AGRICULTURE

Those who are pensioners were described by Mr. Aris as being distributed "normally" through the worker and professional classes, and in the small private sector of the economy. Only in agriculture are Jews not represented a phenomenon that makes them envious of the farmers in Israel.

Contacts with Israel are limited to exchanging greetings on the Jewish New Year. There are more active contacts maintained with Jews in the Communist bloc countries presumably through their central Jewish councils, but not with Russia, where there are no such organizations.

Mr. Aris seemed anxious to convey a picture of Jewish life in positive terms: East Germany is a place sincerely trying to make amends for the past, a place where Jews live in dignity, equality and freedom. As for whether there are grounds for optimism among Jews interested in the survival of their community, Mr. Aris had this to say:

"Jewish existence always required optimism. The ups and downs of Jewish history have shown that the ones with natural optimism survive."

## Greek Independence Day

### EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. FRANK J. HORTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1965

Mr. HORTON. Mr. Speaker, every year the 25th of March provides us with an opportunity to pay our respects to the intellectual achievements of the Greek people, as well as their steadfast and wholehearted commitment to democracy, and defense of the best of Western ideals.

In fact, today represents the 144th anniversary of the independence of the modern state of Greece. Yet I am sure we are all aware that it is impossible to even talk about Western civilization without mentioning the contributions which the Greeks throughout history have made. Indeed, it is in the ancient city-state of Athens that the idea of democracy was first discussed and applied. The great minds of antiquity—Socrates, Plato, Aristotle—debated and analyzed the myriads of possible political systems, and many of their insights remain valid to the present day. At the same time, others were founding or shaping the outlines of a great number of the arts and sciences with which we are all familiar: poetry, drama, painting, sculpture, and architecture; geometry, trigonometry, zoology, botany, physics, and mathematics. Our world today would be a far more primitive place had not these and other Greeks first begun to explore and explain their surroundings in meaningful human terms.

Lest it be thought that their successors on that rocky peninsula achieved nothing, we need only recall the culture and glory of the Byzantine Empire, as well as the achievements of Nikos Kazantzakis, George Seferis, Elia Kazan, Dmitri Mitropoulos and many others in our own time.

The determination of the Greeks to fight for their heritage and their ideals

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has been demonstrated time and again, from the battle of Thermopylae, to the battle of Missolonghi, to the battle of Athens during the Second World War. We are, therefore, privileged and honored to acknowledge our debts to Greece, and our friendship and sympathy for the Greek people. I take this opportunity to add my own best wishes to those of others on this anniversary, and express the conviction that the glory of Greece and the closeness of our relations with that country will forever remain.

Mr. Speaker, Greek achievements and accomplishments are known to me because I have many Greek constituents. I have the greatest admiration and respect for those whose ancestral bond is to Greece. Their contributions—religious, civic, athletic, social, political, cultural, economic—have considerably enriched my home community of Rochester, N.Y., and earned the Greeks the lasting friendship of their fellow citizens.

So, on this occasion while my thoughts are meant for all Greeks, they are prompted particularly by my appreciation and affection for those I have the honor to represent in Congress.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Tshombe's Strength

#### EXTENSION OF REMARKS OF

**HON. WILLIAM S. BROOMFIELD**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1965

Mr. BROOMFIELD. Mr. Speaker, there is an old saying that you cannot keep a good man down. And that adage is certainly coming true in the case of Premier Moise Tshombe of the Congo.

Two years ago, it was even the custom in our State Department to underestimate his abilities, rundown his accomplishments and to attempt to paint him as some sort of a tool of Western imperialism.

He was reviled by the Reds, and still is. He was fought by the petty politicians and would-be dictators who preached their own doctrine of race and religious hatred.

But he has survived, stronger and more respected than ever, offering a voice of hope in a continent torn by hatred and violence. For the benefit of my colleagues, I am inserting in the Record a copy of an editorial which appeared in the Washington Sunday Star of March 22, 1965, entitled "Tshombe's Strength."

As the editorial states, it is, indeed about time and I hope that the administration and the State Department will take note:

#### TSHOMBE'S STRENGTH

Premier Moise Tshombe of the Congo has grown significantly stronger in recent days. His trip to Nairobi, Kenya, to take part in the meeting of the Organization of African Unity, has begun to pay dividends. He has made an excellent impression, and understandably so, on many OAU leaders who have reviled

him in the past as a sort of lackey in the service of Western "imperialism."

This crude and dishonest caricature of the man has been drawn, of course, by Communist propagandists—especially the Chinese—aided and abetted by such people as Nasser's and Ben Bella's Arab smear artists in Cairo and Algiers. It is a caricature that has muddled a lot of soft-headed people in the West, and it has persuaded some of the Congo's neighbors to support the so-called rebels against Tshombe and his legitimate government in Léopoldville.

These rebels—who have been playing the Communist game, wittingly or unwittingly—are guilty of having committed unspeakable atrocities against whites and blacks alike. But now, as a result of Tshombe's conversations in Nairobi, the Congo's neighbors are taking a new look at the situation. The Sudan, for example, has indicated that it will no longer lend itself to the shipment of Algerian, Egyptian, and Communist arms to the Red-led anti-Tshombe forces. And Uganda has said much the same thing.

Similar declarations may be expected from other members of the OAU, including President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya. The true nature of the Congolese rebellion is becoming clear to such leaders, and they don't like what they see. So Mr. Tshombe is slowly but surely gathering support where it counts. It's about time.

### Lead, Zinc, and Copper Disposals

#### EXTENSION OF REMARKS OF

**HON. PHILIP J. PHILBIN**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1965

Mr. PHILBIN. Mr. Speaker, I am desirous of expressing my warm appreciation to all those who were so helpful and considerate to me and our committee in facilitating the favorable consideration by the House on Tuesday, March 23, under unanimous consent of the bill, H.R. 1496, as amended by the Senate. This measure authorizes the disposal, without regard to the 6 months waiting period, of lead, zinc, and copper from the national stockpile and the supplemental stockpile.

As the House understands, this bill provides for the disposal of certain urgently needed strategic materials, principally lead, zinc, and copper that are urgently needed by industry to alleviate current shortages which are causing part-time operation and unemployment in certain industries, and are now threatening to cause even greater unemployment and more serious conditions in these industries.

I want to commend the subcommittee for its prompt, expeditious consideration in reporting the lead and zinc bills when they were before us. It was our expectation and intention to proceed promptly with consideration of several bills for disposal of copper that were pending in the House, but which lacked needed reports from the Federal agencies concerned.

However, when the lead and zinc bills were sent to the other body, certain amendments were added to the zinc bill providing for copper disposal. We should have much preferred to conduct our own hearings on copper in the House, but under the circumstances, since this

measure and the lead bill were incorporated into the zinc bill, we did not feel it would be desirable to duplicate the Senate hearings. It was the decision of the House Armed Services Committee to expedite action on these disposals by accepting the Senate amendments, even though we felt that it would have been better to proceed with hearings on each individual disposal request, and in accordance with our practice, receive adequate evidence concerning the subject matter of pending copper bills, thus giving those who introduced measures on this subject full opportunity to be heard and have their witnesses heard and thus enable our committee to make its own record in our own committee hearings.

However, I feel that we have discharged our duty to the House and to all those concerned in accepting the Senate amendments in this particular instance, even though we do not want it to be understood or construed that this established a precedent that would be followed in the future.

We have made every possible effort to safeguard the national interest in these disposals and to prevent the disruption of markets and price variations to the extent that can be done by legislation, and we have taken great pains to assure there will be orderly, fair, equitable disposal procedures and that our committee will be in a position to followup these matters to make sure that the intent of this legislation is being followed in every feasible, practicable manner.

In all these disposals, it is our expectation that the Government will make a profit from the sales taking place as a result of the action of the Congress on this bill.

There are so many people who are serving and assisting our committee in these matters that it would not be possible to enumerate all of them here. I do want to express my warm, personal appreciation to my very distinguished chairman, the Honorable L. MENDEL RIVERS, who contributed so invaluable to the results achieved, to the officials of the Government, particularly the General Services Administration, the Office of Emergency Planning and those from industry who gave us the benefit of their views and their valued cooperation.

I am also especially thankful to several distinguished friends and colleagues of the committee and the House who introduced bills for the disposal of copper and who so graciously withdrew their request for House committee hearings in order to expedite final action. Some of these colleagues are: the distinguished gentleman from New York [Mr. FIRNIE], the distinguished gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. IRWIN], both members of the Armed Services Committee, and our esteemed colleagues, the distinguished gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. MONTAGAN], the distinguished gentleman from Montana [Mr. OLSEN], the distinguished gentleman from Rhode Island, [Mr. ST GERMAIN], the distinguished gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HARVEY], the distinguished gentleman from Michigan [Mr. HUTCHINSON], and my valued colleague, the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. CONTE].